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A Program for Tenants in Single Room Occupancy [SRO] & For Their New York City Neighbors

A Report Prepared for the Borough President of Manhattan,
the Community Planning Board #7 and its Council of Advisors

June / 1969

CENTER FOR NEW YORK CITY AFFAIRS
NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

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June 10, 1969

The Hon. Percy E. Sutton
Borough President
The Borough of Manhattan

Mr. Henry R. Marquit, Chairman
Community Planning Board No. 7

Dear Sirs:

You requested the Center for New York City Affairs to conduct a study of the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) problem in New York City. The study was to review and evaluate existing data and information and recommend a comprehensive program of facilities and services. We submit herewith our report to you.

In the course of the study, our staff has analyzed the SRO literature and legislation. We have conducted numerous interviews with public officials and private agency executives and staff members. A number of interviews and meetings have been held with SRO tenants.

The SRO problem is complex. It has both human and housing dimensions. Its resolution will require the concerted efforts of many public and private agencies. While the majority of the SRO population are gainfully employed and are fully capable of leading independent lives, a segment of that population is characterized by multiple problems - from unemployment to old age, from alcoholism to addiction. In many instances, the buildings in which they live exacerbate their problems. Over time, many of those buildings have sunk into disrepair, with the result that progressively they attract tenants with less and less life capacity.

On the positive side, our study has revealed a rich variety of programs which have been mounted by both the public and the private sector to meet the needs of these tenants and their neighborhoods. The Housing and Development Administration through its Neighborhood Conservation Bureau, and the Human Resources Administration through its Department of Social Services, have joined forces with hospitals, social service agencies and citizens' groups to provide social services and to encourage tenant

and management interest in the improved maintenance of their facilities.

It is our conclusion that on the basis of experience already gained through these service programs and by an interpretation which we suggest of the existing statutes, the City can now mount a concerted attack on the SRO problem. The report proposes an expansion of social service programs, and recommends legislative action to improve housing for this population group. To initiate that attack and to ensure effective administration of programs and the continued contribution of private agencies, the report recommends:

- . The creation of an SRO Task Force by the Mayor's Policy Planning Council to plan and coordinate an attack on the SRO problem;
- . The designation of the West Side as the first target area; and
- . The formation by Community Planning Board No. 7 of an SRO Advisory Council, including broad local representation.

We hope that this report will provide the required policy guidance for major program expansion and help to raise the level of public understanding of the needs of SRO tenants and neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

HC:jp
encl.

Henry Cohen, Director
Center for New York
City Affairs

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SRO SUMMARY REPORT CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

New York City, particularly the West Side of Manhattan, has a problem population of single "roomers" housed in what are sometimes called slum hotels. Many of these roomers' lives are deteriorated by severe physical or emotional problems, by excessive use of alcohol and drugs, by advanced age, and by the condition of their housing. Their presence in the area is often bitterly resented by the occupants of neighboring buildings who are disturbed by the roomers' noise and violence, their incongruous appearance wandering around on Broadway, and in some of the worst cases, by repeated incidents of thefts and muggings.

These citizens live in buildings technically classified as "Single Room Occupancy Facilities" (SRO), and in SRO-type buildings, such as hotels, rooming houses and lodging houses. It has been estimated that there are approximately 100,000 units of SRO and SRO-type housing in New York City. Of these, 20,000 to 25,000 are on the West Side of Manhattan, between 72nd and 110th Streets. Of the West Side units, 14,500 of them are in buildings classified as SRO; 15,500 to 20,500 are in SRO-type buildings. This concentration of SRO facilities and people led someone to describe the West Side as the "rooming house center of Manhattan."

The "SRO problem" has been long in the making. In the forties, faced with a critical housing shortage, conversion of buildings from Class-A self-contained apartments to single rooms with shared facilities was frequently permitted and even encouraged by the City. Large apartments were hastily and shoddily subdivided into six to eight single rooms, usually lined up off a "railroad" hallway. Bathrooms and kitchens were shared. From the very outset, the units thus created afforded a minimum of living amenities. Over the years these facilities have sunk into dis-

repair. Overuse and deferred maintenance have taken their toll with the result that they now provide a poor environment for a very needy segment of the City's population.

As problems developed, successive City administrations and a variety of private agencies have sought to address them. Codes which regulate this housing have been revised from time to time to correct abuses. Social service programs have been mounted to meet the needs of the tenants.

There is a particular urgency at the present time to develop solutions to both the human and housing dimensions of the SRO problem. In 1967 the City's Administrative Code was amended to require the termination of all SRO housing by 1977. Unless laws are enacted now and steps are taken in the near future to develop adequate housing, the City will be faced with a severe housing shortage for a large number of residents who presently use existing SRO facilities. Unless social service programs are developed now to meet the multiple needs of this segment of the City's population, their lives and their neighborhoods will continue to deteriorate.

To make a significant attack on this problem, three steps should be taken:

1. There should be a major expansion of social service programming in SRO and SRO-type buildings. Using the experience of past and present demonstration projects, working in conjunction with the many private agencies who have provided leadership in this field, the City should mount new programs in "problem" SRO and SRO-type buildings. (pps. 20-23)
2. The 1977 deadline should be maintained under the conditions outlined below. Emphasizing the express permission contained in the statute for the creation or maintenance of SRO's after

1977 which are "owned, operated or used by the City," a plan should be developed for the renovation of existing and potential SRO facilities to meet new housing and service program standards. Renovated facilities, even if privately owned, could then be given Certificates of Occupancy on the grounds that they were "used by the City" to provide housing for a needy segment of its population. The 1977 termination and permission clause of the present statute would thus become a conduit for the provision of housing at considerably less cost to the City than new construction of shared facility housing. (pps. 28-33)

3. To raise the SRO problem to a high level of priority and to mount a concerted attack on it, the Mayor's Policy Planning Council should appoint an SRO Task Force for the period of one year. The Task Force should be comprised of the Administrators and Commissioners of relevant agencies. This Task Force, with a small staff and budget, should develop detailed plans and code requirements for the expansion of social service programs and for the renovation of SRO facilities. It should design and set in motion administrative mechanisms which will assure an effective implementation of plans. (pps. 39-50)

SERVICE PROGRAMS -

Three different approaches in past and present service programs can be identified and described. All three provide programs within SRO buildings. While hard distinctions cannot be made between them, they

vary in the nature of the staff, in program strategy and content, and in the client group served:

1. The use of an interdisciplinary team comprised of various specialists who provide social services, referrals and a program of recreation and activities for all the residents of a building;
2. The use of case and group workers from the Department of Social Services who, by caseload consolidation, work solely with the welfare clients in a building, providing social services and recreation programs;
3. An approach which for the purpose of this report is called the "self-service method" in which a group worker builds a program of recreation, rehabilitation and mutual self-help on the base of the existing social structure within the SRO facility.

Recommendations:

- Existing programs which use this variety of approaches should be maintained at their present level and subjected to careful review and evaluation within one year. (Page 23)
- A major expansion of social service programs should be undertaken in other problem SRO and SRO-type buildings, pursuing the self-service approach in order to meet the needs of those tenants and to establish the outer limits and feasibility of that approach. (Page 23)
- Wherever feasible, new programs should include prevocational counselling and referral to job training. (Page 23)

In developing the qualifications for SRO's which will be certified as "used" by the City in the proposed housing program, a primary concern

is to provide the necessary conditions for social rehabilitation.

Recommendations:

- In addition to the present requirements of the new building code for SRO's, eligibility for this new certification and its exemption from the 1977 termination should be conditioned upon the provision of some recreation space; on some minimal standards for furnishings and mattresses, and on higher standards for security of lights, garbage collection, cleaning and repair. (Page 34)
- Guidelines should be developed to ensure basic cooperation with the in-building service program by the owner and manager. (Page 34)
- If, in accordance with guidelines and specifications to be developed by the SRO Task Force, and after investigation and due process, the maintenance or management of the building interferes with the social rehabilitation program, the Certificate of Occupancy should be revoked or otherwise conditioned.

In addition to providing the necessary physical environment for the tenants and the service programs, sufficient manpower for program expansion, the effective operation of the ~~Department~~ of Social Services, and the strengthening of its links with voluntary agencies and citizen organizations, are important.

Recommendations:

- The DOSS caseworkers should be the primary source of manpower, since an estimated minimum of 40% of all SRO tenants presently receive public assistance, and since the DOSS staff is already involved with the

SRO problem. (Page 36)

- A mechanism should be created which will ensure the vital contribution of private agencies to program design, operation and evaluation. (Page 36)
- A plan, which was prepared by DOSS staff from the Amsterdam Center, proposing changes in DOSS operation so that the successful methods of the demonstration projects could be more widely used in SRO's, should become the basis for development of new methods of service delivery and of staff training. (Page 38)

FACILITIES -

There are two alternative approaches to the facilities problem. Both involve the provision of shared facility housing for this segment of the population:

1. New construction of shared facility housing.
2. Renovation of existing SRO's and of potential SRO buildings.

This renovation could be brought about as outlined above by maintaining the 1977 termination requirement and emphasizing the express permission of Section D 26-33.07 of the statute for the creation of SRO's which are "used" by the City.

While there is no reason to preclude the new construction of shared facility housing if resources are available for it, the second alternative is preferred, because it would save the City both the expense of new housing and the cost of neighborhood deterioration by slum SRO's.

Recommendations:

- All Federal, State and Public Housing legislation should

- be reviewed to see if it can be extended administratively to include the development of housing for non-elderly single persons. If it cannot be extended under present legislation, efforts should be undertaken to revise legislation in order to include these persons. (Page 28)
- A plan for the geographic distribution of new SRO's should be developed. (Page 30)
 - Minimal standards for housing and service programs should be set forth. (Page 30)
 - Once such plans have been agreed upon, newly renovated SRO's which meet those standards should receive a Certificate of Occupancy as an SRO used by the City. (Page 30)
 - In order to extend the purpose of the Municipal Loan Fund to include the provisions of housing with shared facilities, legislation which was recently vetoed by the Governor should be reintroduced. (Page 32)
 - There should be a detailed and continuing analysis of other funding sources, potential and available, and a strategy for pursuing them. (Page 32)
 - A list should be developed of supplementary improvements in building maintenance or operation or in physical facilities, which would justify specific rent increases and which the owner would be assisted in procuring. (Page 35)
 - Assistance should be provided the owner in obtaining a municipal loan for any such renovation. (Page 35)

IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS:

In order to initiate a concerted attack on the SRO problem, and to make plans for a redistribution of SRO's geographically and for the enforcement of a practical set of requirements for the physical condition of the building which include cooperation with a flexible in-building service program, the SRO problem will have to be raised to a high level of priority in the Mayor's office.

Recommendations:

- The SRO problem should be given priority attention by the Mayor's Policy Planning Council. (Page 39)
- The Policy Planning Council should appoint a Single Room Occupancy Task Force to initiate central planning and evaluation, and to develop mechanisms for the coordination of programs, agencies and staff. The proposed Mayoral appointees to this Task Force, ex-officio, should be the Administrators of the Housing and Development Administration, Health Services Administration, Human Resources Administration, the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services and the chairmen of the City Planning Commission and the New York City Housing Authority. (Page 39)
- The chairman of the Task Force should be selected by the Mayor from the membership of the Policy Planning Council. (Page 41)
- This Task Force should be appointed for the period of one year, at which time progress in planning, program development and administration should be reviewed to see whether or not the continuation of the Task Force is required. (Page 39)

- In order to carry out its responsibilities to develop programs and administrative mechanisms and to conduct studies, the Task Force should be provided with a Project Manager, a small staff and a budget. (Page 40)
- The staff should design and oversee the conduct of studies which will lead to a rational plan for the redistribution and improvement of SRO facilities, and to the development of a City-wide service program for SRO residents. (Page 40) (These studies are described on pages 40 - 45.)
- Two matters should receive high priority attention by the Task Force and its staff: Exploration of the feasibility of the "City use" concept described above; and development and institution of a training program for DOSS group workers. (Page 45)
- Provision should be made to contract with private agencies to carry out studies and to perform such other services as the Task Force may deem appropriate. (Page 45)

There is a predominance of SRO's on the West Side. West Side agencies have developed considerable experience in programming for SRO's.

Recommendations:

- The West Side should be designated by the Task Force as its first demonstration area. (Page 46)
- Service programs should be launched in each problem SRO and SRO-type building on the West Side. (Page 46)
- Community Planning Board No. 7 should be requested to create an SRO Advisory Committee which would include representatives of public and voluntary agencies,

citizen organizations and tenant groups concerned
or working with SRO problems. (Page 47)

PROPOSED STAFF AND COSTS FOR SRO TASK FORCE - ONE YEAR:

Estimated costs for SRO Task Force and West Side Service Program-(Page 49)

To carry out the work of the Task Force outlined above:	\$98,500.00
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To develop SRO data, perform program analyses and evaluations, and to develop housing and service plans:	\$100,000.00
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To develop social service programs on the West Side:	\$259,875.00
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The investment of these resources would enable the City to plan and initiate a program which would meet the needs of SRO tenants and their neighborhoods. Significant progress has already been made on the West Side. If the City were now to build on the experience which has been gained there, taking advantage of the impetus which West Side citizens and agencies have created, it could contribute in a significant way to the renewal and rebirth of that community.

INTRODUCTION

The report which follows explores the scope of the SRO-problem, reviews past and present efforts to address it, and recommends action in the areas of housing and social services.

This report is the result of a study conducted by the Center for New York City Affairs of the New School for Social Research. It was commissioned by New York City's Community Planning Board No. 7, in whose area the highest concentration of SRO and SRO-type facilities is to be found. Under contract with the Office of The Hon. Percy F. Sutton, Borough President of Manhattan, the Center was commissioned to:

- a) Review and bring together existing data and research;
- b) Evaluate the existing data and information in terms of solutions to the SRO problem;
- c) Recommend additional areas of study, if any, which may be needed as the basis for an action program; and,
- d) Prepare and delineate the elements necessary for a planned, coordinated and comprehensive program of facilities and services.

In carrying out the assignment the Center reviewed relevant documents, reports, proposals and previous studies. The study staff interviewed and obtained detailed information from knowledgeable and concerned executives of interested organizations and agencies, from their key staff members, and also from community leaders and tenants.

One public meeting was held in mid-October at which tenant leaders and some of their community supporters and friends presented their views on the problems and suggestions for ameliorative steps. Smaller meetings were held with individuals and groups, and some interviews were conducted with tenants.

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1. See Appendix "A" for Bibliography and Listing of Documents.
 2. See Appendix "B" for Acknowledgements and List of Persons Consulted.

The interviews with all persons were intended to be informative and not exhaustive or inclusive. Those with tenants, while not a scientific sample, seemed accurately to reflect and confirm the situation as described by others.

The study staff also went through several SRO buildings, including a group on West 85th Street, the Endicott Hotel, the Stratford Arms, and other SRO facilities. These visits again were not intended to be comprehensive or detailed inspections. Nonetheless, they confirmed repeated descriptions of the squalid conditions of SRO's by all observers.

Principal investigators were Jerome N. Sampson and Charlotte Frank of the Center's staff. They were assisted in the summer months by an Urban Corps intern, Elizabeth Hausknecht. The report was revised and edited in preparation for final publication by Marilyn Ordovery, Consultant to the Center, and by Lyman B. Stookey, Program Associate of the Center.

THE QUESTION PRESENTED

New York City, particularly the West Side of Manhattan, has a problem population of single "roomers" housed in what are sometimes called slum hotels. Many of these roomers' lives are dreadfully deteriorated by severe physical or emotional problems, often in combination with excessive use of alcohol and drugs, by advanced age, and by the condition of their housing. Their presence in the area is often bitterly resented by the occupants of neighboring buildings who are disturbed by the roomers' noise and violence, their incongruous appearance wandering around on Broadway, and in some of the worst cases, by repeated incidents of thefts and muggings.

On the West Side, the majority of these roomers live in single room occupancy (SRO) buildings. Although the label is sometimes used for all furnished rooms tenanted by these roomers, the true, legally certificated¹ SRO's, are usually old or new-law tenements, where apartments have been subdivided for individual occupancy. Rooms are rented by the week. The conversion of the original apartments creates separately occupied furnished rooms within the space previously used for one apartment, all sharing the kitchen, bath and toilet facilities.

The "SRO problem" has been long in the making. In the forties, the City faced a critical housing shortage. To meet that shortage, conversion of buildings from Class A, self-contained apartments to single rooms with shared facilities was freely permitted and even encouraged. At the time, this appeared an expedient and inexpensive way to relieve the shortage. Typically, large apartments were hastily and shoddily subdivided into six to eight single rooms, usually lined up off a "railroad" hallway. Bathrooms and kitchens were shared. The former apartment door was gener-

1. Taken from the Housing Maintenance Code, July 14, 1967, Department of Buildings, pp 2-3.

ally left open. Locks were put on the individual rooms. From the very outset, the units thus created afforded a minimum of living amenities. Over the years these facilities have sunk into disrepair. Overuse and deferred maintenance have taken their toll with the result that they now provide a poor environment for a very needy segment of the City's population.

A changing population has used this housing. During the post-war period, the single rooms were rented to students and returning servicemen. With the Puerto Rican migrations of the fifties, these individual rooms sometimes housed six or seven people. Family occupancy was eventually declared illegal, at which time unattached single persons became almost the exclusive occupants of the SRO.

What was initially an expedient housing solution, over a period of time became a community hazard and nuisance. The incidence of fire increased. The use of these facilities by families accentuated their existing problems and caused additional ones. Their use by the sick, aged, alcoholic, addicted or other problem-laden single persons, in due course brought increased difficulties to the owners. Their presence and behavior in the community proved threatening and upsetting to families living in the same areas in middle-income apartments and to single persons living in better hotels or apartments.

As these problems developed, successive City administrations and a variety of private agencies have sought to address them. Codes which regulate this housing have been revised from time to time to correct abuses. Social service programs have been mounted to meet the needs of the tenants. A detailed review and analysis of these efforts is presented in Chapter II and in Appendix "C".

The last two to three years have seen an escalation of these efforts.

The Department of Social Services has experimented with a variety of new techniques of service delivery. Caseload consolidation, which enables a caseworker to work solely with tenants of a single building, has considerably increased the effectiveness of Department staff. New linkages have been forged between private and public agencies, each contributing expertise and money to this endeavor. The annotated chronology of service programs in Appendix "C" gives some indication of the large numbers of citizen groups and private agencies which have been involved in these efforts. Most recently an Office of Problem Housing has been created in the Housing and Development Administration. A major concern of this Office is the needs of SRO tenants and neighborhoods.

There is a particular urgency at the present time to develop solutions to both the human and housing dimensions of the SRO problem. In 1967 the City's Administrative Code was amended to require the termination of all SRO housing by 1977. Details about this legislation are provided in Chapter II. Unless plans are made now and steps are taken in the near future to develop adequate housing, the City will be faced with a severe housing shortage for a large number of residents who presently use existing SRO facilities. Unless social service programs are developed now to meet the multiple needs of this segment of the City's population, their lives and their neighborhoods will continue to deteriorate.

CHAPTER I: THE SCOPE OF NEW YORK'S SRO PROBLEM:

1. Facilities -

Some confusion arises because the same basic type of single room with shared facilities is found in buildings which are not technically classified SRO's but are legally certified as hotels, rooming houses or lodging houses. Since the roomers and the problems in these buildings are indistinguishable from those in the SRO's, much of the literature on the social problems presented ignores the different labels and describes them all as SRO's.

The technical definitions of these SRO-type accommodations are:

Hotels - inns providing at least thirty sleeping units, conducted as a hotel under appropriate codes and providing certain hotel-type services (such as switchboard, maid, doorman, etc.)

Rooming Houses - Class B converted dwellings with more than half of their rooms operated as rooming units. The designation usually refers to one-or-two family dwellings, largely brownstones, converted to rooming house use. The units usually do not include bathrooms or kitchens and rent is collected weekly.

Lodging Houses - Multiple dwellings, other than hotels, rooming houses, or SRO's, in which persons are usually housed for less than a week. These are often cubicle-type or flop house shelters.

The total number of SRO's and SRO type units in New York City was 98,400¹ in 1965. In 1968, the number of technically classified SRO units was reported to be 32,500. Roughly one-third of the

1. Rapkin, Chester, "The Private Rental Market in New York City, 1965. See Appendix "A"

City's accommodations for single persons then, are in legally classified SRO's. The balance are in rooming houses, hotels and lodging houses.¹

For the West Side area from 72nd St. to 110th Street the total number of such single-room, shared facilities units is from 20,000 to 25,000. Of these 14,500 are SRO units.

New York City as a whole has 529 SRO buildings, according to an estimate of the Department of Buildings in March, 1968: Manhattan, 366; Bronx, 104; Brooklyn, 55; Queens and Staten Island combined, 4.²

Of the 366 SRO's in Manhattan, 145 are on the West Side (in the area from 74th St. north to 110th, and from Central Park West to Riverside Drive). It is estimated that between 40 to 60 SRO and SRO type buildings on the West Side have individuals with severe personal and social problems. Because the average buildings on the West Side are larger than the city-wide pattern, almost one-half of the SRO tenants in the city live on the West Side. This concentration of SRO and SRO-type facilities led someone to describe the West Side as the present "rooming house center of Manhattan".³

It is important to note that one quarter of the city's SRO buildings contain more than 100 units, and one half of the SRO buildings have from 10 to 99 units. These proportions are somewhat heavier on the West Side, which also has SRO-type tenants in sizeable concentrations living in hotels. Thus the single-roomer problem on the West Side is concentrated more in middle to large buildings.

1. Report on "SRO Statistics", Neighborhood Conservation Bureau, 5/68

2. Ibid.

3. Nash, George. The Habitats of Homeless Men in Manhattan, 1964. Columbia University, Bureau of Applied Research. Prepared for N.Y.C. Dep't. of Welfare. See Part D, page 25.

While these larger units make possible and appropriate some group services, and increase the viability of steps for housing improvements, they also increase the likelihood of neighborhood nuisance and the subsequent pressures for amelioration or elimination of single room occupancy.

2. People -

Who are the roomers in these "problem" SRO and SRO-type buildings?

Unfortunately there are no accurate statistics which indicate the number of individuals who live in SRO and SRO-type accommodations. A study which would develop this information is recommended in Chapter IV. Nonetheless a profile of these residents can be provided. A general description of the rooms helps bring their tenants into focus. They are poorly furnished small bedrooms. Nine out of ten lack a private bathroom. Only 38% provide cooking equipment; this is often no more than a single or two-burner electric hot plate.

The median monthly rent is \$60.80 - one third can be rented for less than \$50 monthly, one-third for \$50-70 and one-third for over \$70.

Their tenants are the disaffiliated and isolated poor. About 4,500¹ are "homeless" men. The use of this description, despite the man's fixed residence in the rooming house, emphasizes the deprived quality of the room and of the roomer's life. The "homeless" man is defined as one living without kin in a housing unit for which he pays rent of no more than \$12 weekly or \$30 monthly. If the tenant is a welfare client, these limits do not apply and the rent paid may be higher. If employed, the homeless man works at certain types of low-status jobs.²

A paper by the Director of the Amsterdam Social Services Center describes the roomer population:³

1. Nash, op. cit., at A-1 and C-31

2. Ibid

3. See Zerwick, The Public Agency as a Team Participant, cited in Att. #1.

"....Referrals to these buildings are from hospitals and custodial institutions. Unfortunately, in New York City, there has been no significant development of "halfway" accommodations. Obviously, many of these discharged persons are not ready to live in these SRO buildings, but are forced to do so since there is no other housing available to them."

* * *

"Although the 'poor' in our city have begun to move from passively receiving money and services to a more active role in challenging policies and procedures and in making their real needs known, the people whom we are describing have not been part of this movement. This has been partly due to the concentration of their disabilities, their overwhelming fear, apathy and immobilization. These unattached people have used health and other facilities only on a crisis basis...Experience has shown that even when they do utilize medical clinics, hospital aides and doctors treat them shabbily and disrespectfully. The community and social systems are too demanding and overwhelming for them."

Significant numbers of these West Side roomers are malnourished, alcoholic, drug addicted, severely disturbed emotionally or affected with chronic medical disabilities.

The presence of these buildings and their population on West Side streets has brought outbursts of street brawls and drinking bouts. There have been frequent police and ambulance calls and many incidents of thefts and muggings associated with the roomers.

Chapter II: PAST AND PRESENT RESPONSES TO THE NEEDS OF SRO
TENANTS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

1. Regulation -

Since the early 1950's, the City has been trying to control the abuses and problems developing in SRO's and in their vicinity by means of legislation. The ordinances regulating and restricting SRO's have grown steadily more confining, in the direction of gradually phasing out these troubled buildings. Thus the reconversion of these buildings into self-contained renovated apartments was encouraged by the availability of financing and tax benefits for this purpose. Simultaneously there were city ordinances imposing standards for SRO building maintenance. For example, the Building Code sections of the City's Administrative Code regulating single room occupancy require that the operator of an SRO building clean every sleeping room once a week. He must also change bed linens weekly and provide each tenant with a bath towel and two hand towels where such service is included in the rent. To reinforce the code provisions, every owner or lessee of an SRO building must obtain a permit annually authorizing the operation of the SRO from the Department of Buildings. Issuance of a permit is conditioned on the absence of building violations.

Theoretically, the annual permit requirement would force all SRO operators to eliminate the conditions which violated the building code, in order to qualify for their permits. Actually, many SRO building operators are presently functioning without their permits. The presence of building violations prevented them from obtaining permits but the lack of a permit simply results in the issuance of another violation, with its attendant slow enforcement machinery.

Going further, the scope of the SRO problem was limited by forbidding the creation of any more SRO's after 1956.¹

1. N.Y.C. Admin. Code, Housing Maintenance Code, D26-33.07 (1968).

This prohibition was directed at the creation of the kind of SRO which had been a source of difficulty, i.e., owned by a private party and operated for profit. Specifically exempted from this prohibition were SRO's created by certain public non-profit organizations for certain socially useful purposes. In the language of the law as presently in force, the only exceptions here relevant to the prohibition against creating new SRO's are for SRO's which are either owned and operated without profit by an educational, religious or charitable institution as a residence for the aged, or for working girls or women, or for working boys or men; or "owned, operated or used by The City of New York."¹

The new Housing Maintenance Code of 1967² takes the final step and provides a termination date for all of the remaining SRO's, i.e., even those created before the 1956 prohibition. This Code requires the upgrading of SRO's created before the 1956 prohibition as a condition of such occupancy, and terminates "all" SRO's, "in any event", by 1977. The required upgrading decreased the ratio of tenants to sanitary facilities. For every six SRO tenants, there must be at least one water closet, one wash basin and one bath or shower. The statutory deadline for the completion of any necessary installations was January 1, 1968; and all single room occupancies which had not, by that date, satisfied the higher sanitary facilities ratio were to be discontinued.

After the January 1968 deadline, the Department of Rent and Housing Maintenance did not enforce the penalty for non-compliance on the ground that there was a shortage of accommodations for tenants who would be displaced. (It was reported that the Department issued violations but did not prosecute them.) In March 1969, this law was amended and the deadline for the completion of any necessary installations was extended to January 1, 1971, with a July 1, 1970 deadline for filing plans. (Laws of 1969, No. 11)

1. N.Y.C. Admin. Code, Housing Maintenance Code, D26-33.07 (1968)

2. N.Y.C. Admin. Code, Section D26-33.11 (1968)

2. Service Programs

Description and Analysis of the Different Approaches Used in Demonstration and Service Projects

In response to the needs of SRO tenants, public and private social agencies and community organizations, in various combinations of agency and organizational relationships, have worked together on individual buildings and on one or two block projects on the West Side. The principal organizations and groups engaged in these projects have been:

The Department of Social Services (DOSS) of the City's Human Resources Administration (HRA);

The Neighborhood Conservation Bureau (NCB), and several of the West Side offices, all part of the City's Housing and Development Administration (HDA);

St. Luke's Hospital, through its Department of Community Psychiatry, and recently also through the Department of Social Services;

Roosevelt Hospital, through its Department of Community Psychiatry;

The Community Service Society (CSS),

The Planetarium Council, and some of its constituent block organizations such as those on 80th Street, West 83rd Street, and West 85th Street; and

The Manhattan After-Care Division of the State Department of Mental Hygiene.

There has also been participation in some of the projects from community action groups of the anti-poverty program and from the Federal VISTA program. An annotated chronology of past and present demonstration projects is provided in Appendix "C".

Three different approaches in these experimental service programs can be identified and described. While hard distinctions cannot be made between them, they vary in the nature of the staff, in program strategy and content, and in the client group served. In one approach characteristic of a number of the projects, an interdisciplinary team comprised of various specialists provides social services, referrals

and a program of recreation and activities for all the residents of a building. In another approach, tried in a number of buildings, case and group workers from the Department of Social Services, through caseload consolidation, have worked solely with the welfare clients in a building, providing social services and recreation programs. In a third approach, which for the purposes of this report is labeled the "self-service method", a single group worker has built a program of recreation, rehabilitation, and mutual self help on the base of the existing social structure within the SRO facility.

1. The in-building approach which was tested at 207 West 85th Street and was written up in the "World of 207,"¹ involved a team of workers from different agencies with different specialities: a nurse, a group worker, a specialist in housing code enforcement, caseworkers and a coordinator. (See Appendix "C" on page 60.)

These persons operated within the SRO, with one member of the team on hand every afternoon. To permit the welfare caseworkers to concentrate on a single building, they were assigned consolidated case loads, i.e., solely tenants in 207.

This approach aims to render intensive services to individuals -- particularly health service, assistance in dealing with public assistance agencies, and improvement of building condition. In a sense this team approach is a classic response to the question of the best way to solve the problem of the SRO's. It leads to the inference that there must be a substantial increase in the services rendered and in staff.

1) A report prepared by the West Side In-Building Committee of the Neighborhood Conservation Bureau.

Indeed the interdisciplinary team of "207" recommended that future in-building projects provide added services--with more specialists on the team.

2. The distinguishing feature of the second in-building approach, used in the Stratford Arms Hotel, was that service and program were provided solely to welfare recipients, who comprised slightly less than half the building's total residents. (See Appendix "C", page 66.) This approach included group recreation, such as an initial coffee klatch and the subsequent Thanksgiving party for the 158 welfare clients in the 400-tenant building. The two full-time and one part-time DOSS caseworkers assigned to these clients, via caseload consolidation, conducted this group activities program, with help of some VISTA aides.

The rationale for this group activities program was to attack the reputed isolation of these SRO-type welfare recipients from social activities, from the outside world and from one another.

The DOSS workers receive advice and further training in group work and in dealing with their clients' psychological problems through regular meetings with staff members of Roosevelt Hospital.

A large number of this group of tenants on welfare in the Hotel were deeply troubled mentally. There is no indication that during the course of the project they were linked into any social structure among themselves or that they had any self-helping relationships.

3. Another in-building approach involves only a single social worker.¹

1. Shapiro, Joan: Single Room Occupancy - Community of the Alone; and The Slum Hotel. See Appendix "A". The assignment of DOSS caseworkers to welfare tenants continued but these workers were not assigned to help render services in these tenant recreation-rehabilitation programs.

It might be called the "self-service" method. It was initially tested at The Bryn Mawr, 32 West 121st Street. (See Appendix "C") The same approach was then used at 404 West 115th Street, 106 West 83rd Street, 319 West 94th Street and 317 West 95th Street. (See Appendix "C"). In this approach, as a matter of policy, the social worker does not work primarily with the individual tenant, but with the population of each building as a total community. The force of the social structure, which is present even in notorious SRO buildings, is enlisted to support the social worker's efforts. The existing leaders who are found to be functioning in a rough and informal way, each as the head of a specific family cluster of tenants, become the social worker's allies in building a recreation-rehabilitation program.

Where this method was tested, there was found to be a functioning system of mutual help among the tenants which could be built upon. For example, an older woman kept certain bedridden tenants clean and fed with fair regularity and no material compensation. Another woman, albeit alcoholic and ill, provided emergency meals for any hungry tenant so long as she had food supplies. In turn, other alcoholic tenants came in to invite her to share their new bottles. A strong ex-boxer stopped dangerous fights.

This existing system of mutual aid within the SRO and SRO-type building is shifted and expanded, by means of this organizational and therapeutic approach, to create recreation, to control anti-social behavior, and to encourage a reaching out
1
by them for medical or social services.

1. Shapiro, Joan, The Slum Hotel, p. 10. See Attachment #1.

The key ingredient in this method and the source of its power, is the stimulation of a social structure by the social worker to produce therapeutic change in individuals and groups.¹ The tenant leaders help in securing the tenants' interest and the tenants participate in carrying out recreation and rehabilitation programs.² The initial experiment which "discovered" the social structure within an SRO building and made use of this "new" ingredient, has been repeated in four more SRO's by other social workers who all had "strikingly" similar experiences.³

Project reports and evaluations obtained during the study from many levels of staff of different agencies, from interested community "friends" of the tenants of SRO's, and from the tenants themselves, support positive conclusions about the effect of all three approaches. Cleaner and more orderly buildings reveal themselves on visits to projects at differing stages - the early stages, for example, of the West 85th Street Block project, as contrasted with the more highly developed stages at the Endicott and Stratford Arms Hotels. Fewer robberies and muggings occur where the projects gain impact. Even alcoholics and addicts seem to modify their habits to the point where they participate to some extent in the activities programs. Other tenants benefit visibly through their roles in the programs and begin to cope better with their daily living problems and their health difficulties. Their relationships with others become more meaningful. In general then, all three approaches established the value of a comprehensive social-service program comprised of

1. Shapiro, Joan, The Slum Hotel, p. 10. See Appendix "A".
2. Shapiro, Joan, The Slum Hotel, see Appendix "A".
3. See article describing this Stratford Arms project in The Welfarer, cited in Appendix "A".

casework and group work directly in the building, entailing case-load consolidation for welfare workers. The reports of those who administered the programs strongly support the conclusion that the disabilities of these tenants preclude the possibility of expecting them to initiate requests for social services. The success which has been achieved in these projects depends largely on the presence of the workers in the building on a continuing basis. The availability of the workers and the variety of services which he offers, or to which he can refer the tenants, appear to be keys to the changes which have been brought about in tenant lives and SRO neighborhoods.

The interdisciplinary team method of "207" supplied services. From their base within the SRO the team was able to serve the tenants better: by making some health services available in the SRO and by helping tenants obtain those which were not, many of the tenants' medical needs were diagnosed or treated. Some of the alcoholics and addicts accepted medical supervision. The tenants were helped to obtain the maximum public assistance grants to which they were entitled. There was building code enforcement. The group worker developed a recreation program with some tenant participation; a recreation room was obtained and set up. Some tenants took responsibility for and operated a cooking program. "207" was a research oriented project and an important pioneer on the SRO.

The buildings in which the "Self-Service Approach" was applied showed very impressive progress in about six months, toward resolving two aspects of the SRO problem; the poor condition of the tenants; and the legitimate objections of the neighborhood; with greater administrative simplicity than the other methods:

"The amount of noise and nuisance perceived by the neighboring community was drastically reduced in every instance. Arrest rates and police calls became infrequent but did not disappear. The morale of many tenants seemed higher, as was evidenced by improved personal appearance and care of rooms, extended social relationships, greater protectiveness toward one another. Check day, a customary time for acting out, became¹ indistinguishable from other days."

This method greatly enhances the effectiveness of the social worker's valuable organizational and therapeutic approach by adding to it the strength of the resources in the building. Very quickly after the social worker has achieved the necessary rapport with the functioning leaders of the social clusters into which the tenants have arranged themselves, tenants participate in planning group projects and in operating them.

In six months, this approach produced: a recreation room open twelve hours a day, fully supervised by shifts of tenants and actively used by the tenants for television, cards, music, movies, religious services and tenant meetings; a bi-weekly dinner for all tenants cooked by committees of tenants under different tenant chairmen; a large number of tenant requested social, psychological or medical referrals, and a referral process in which a tenant Committee on Rehabilitation worked jointly with the social

1. Shapiro, Joan, The Slum Hotel, see Attachment #1.

worker and the tenant seeking a referral. The chairman of the committee largely assumed the task of accompanying tenants on their first visit to a new clinic or center.¹ The self-service approach produced "improvement of individual and group functioning and containment of externally visible antisocial behavior."²

The accomplishments of the group activities program in the Stratford Arms seem somewhat less satisfactory. The tenants' involvement in planning for future programs was much slower in coming and was reduced in degree. From the first coffee klatch in August, there was no tenant participation in planning until a party in December. The actual work on the details of meetings and parties continued to be done by the workers.

With the library project there was much greater tenant involvement at all stages from suggestion to implementation. And yet, after a period of almost one year, the cooperating psychiatric supervisor on the Roosevelt Hospital team described the need for developing more initiative and leadership as an important goal for the future.

There may be many reasons for the difference in results in the Stratford Arms. It may be attributable to the difference in its method and the self-service method which was used in other buildings. The social structure and tenant interconnections may have existed in the Stratford Arms but may have been obscured by the limitation of program to welfare recipients. On the other hand, the problems of these tenants may be too severe to permit any method to produce better results.

1. These are the specific accomplishments of the first project using this method but the four following ones have similar results.
2. Ibid. See citations above to works of Joan Shapiro.

3. Conclusions and Recommendation re: Future Service Programs -

Considerably more evidence needs to be accumulated and no single approach should be used exclusively.¹ Nonetheless, the self-service seems the best of these three approaches in terms of results and speed. That this approach requires no more than one social worker in each of many buildings adds simplicity of administration to its appeal. By contrast, the interdisciplinary team method, complete with team coordinator, has often encountered problems in procuring smooth interagency collaboration. Of course, there were DOSS caseworkers from the Amsterdam Center serving the welfare recipient tenants in the building where this approach was demonstrated, and the Amsterdam Center was a cooperating agency.

This approach does place great demands upon the social worker. To be successful the worker must see the tenant as a person who has strength and capacities, and an ability to make decisions for himself. This approach further requires that the worker work with the community-as-a-whole, with all the tenants and the management of a single building.

Furthermore, the maximum size of buildings in which this approach would be feasible has not been established. The author of this method believes that adding any additional staff such as a social worker, case worker or indigenous worker, to provide more services in buildings of less than 100-120 tenants, might be counterproductive.²

Because the single social worker is "understaffed" the worker becomes completely involved in the project. With more staff, the involvement

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1. Factors such as size of a building, proximity to other SRO's, degree and type of pathology, racial composition and the attitude of the management would all have to enter into the decision as to which approach to use.
 2. Conversation with Joan Shapiro and members of the Study Group staff, July 12, 1968.

of each might be limited to an assigned function. Paying indigenous workers might impair the natural patterns of the tenant leaders which are so important to this approach; and the existence of added staff might reduce the pressure on the tenants to do things for themselves and for others. Up to the present time, the largest building in which the self-service approach has been used housed 250 persons. It has been indicated by the administrators and staff of those projects that under ideal conditions, a worker would be provided for every 100 tenants. If, on the other hand, budgetary restrictions precluded that number of workers, it is their judgment that a worker could deal reasonably effectively with up to 200 tenants.

For purposes of projection, if this approach were used in many West Side problem SRO and SRO-type buildings, we could expect to achieve, in about the same period of time, results quite similar to the demonstration projects. On the basis of information we now have, the conclusion is warranted that a good deal of the anti-social behavior would stop, such as visible drunkenness, midnight brawls, bottles thrown from windows and police visits. The interest and hope stimulated by the new activities in the buildings would help to alleviate the causes of such behavior. There might still be thefts and muggings resulting from the economic needs of those who were addicted to drugs or alcohol.

The tenants' condition would have taken a turn upward - toward feelings of pride in themselves and their building. Their health would be better. They would have more friends. They would function somewhat better as individuals and as a group and be able to control externally visible anti-social behavior. These changes would bring about a reduction in the degree of neighborhood resentment over the

presence of SRO buildings.

Over time, some progress would be made in reducing the squalor of the living conditions in these buildings. However, even with the introduction of in-building self-service programs, many buildings would likely continue to exhibit unhealthy and inadequate conditions, in sharp contrast to buildings in the rest of the neighborhood. The managers of these buildings would continue to have a determinative effect on the conditions of life in these buildings: (a) On building maintenance such as repairs, painting, cleaning, extermination, and the presence of a front door lock or a night watchman; (b) On the treatment which tenants received from landlords; (c) On enforcement of internal order or the continuation of illegal activities such as selling wine to alcoholics at high prices when bars and liquor stores are closed, lending money on a two-for-one basis, pushing narcotics and prostitution. The manager's use of his authority and his willingness to help the tenants deal with the police, hospitals and the DOSS will continue to be an important factor.

Although crucial, the immediate difference which such a broad-scale program might make may still be small. To achieve significant and lasting improvements, the services of the social worker would be necessary over an extended period of time, and the social service program would have to be coupled with a major program of building renovation and improvement. Additionally, in order to provide the tenant with an economic base, prevocational counseling and job training would have to be added to the social service program. Unless these services were provided this segment of the population would have to depend upon income maintenance and social services on a permanent basis.

In the light of the above analysis, it is our RECOMMENDATION:

THAT existing programs which use the variety of approaches outlined above be maintained at their present level and subjected to careful review and evaluation within a year;

THAT a major expansion of social programs be undertaken in other problem SRO and SRO-type buildings pursuing the self-service approach in order to meet the needs of those tenants and to establish the outer limits of feasibility of this approach; and

THAT wherever feasible new programs include prevocational counseling and referral to job training.

Chapter III: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO THE FACILITIES PROBLEM:

As noted above, the "typical" SRO building is described in the literature on the demonstration service projects as dark, smelly and roach-infested. Over the years, these facilities have sunk into disrepair. Tenant-candidates for such housing are apt to be people whose choice of housing is limited because of some combination of disadvantages such as poverty, chronic illness or disability, mental illness, alcoholism, drug addiction or engagement in criminal activities.

This deterioration of existing SRO facilities and the acute needs of those who presently use them create a difficult dilemma which the City must now address. If a 1977 termination is maintained, and no other facilities are developed in the interim, a segment of the population on the order of 100,000 people will be without housing.

To address that dilemma, this chapter outlines two alternatives, both of which seek to provide housing in a rehabilitative environment for the SRO tenant - new construction of shared facility housing; or a method whereby existing legislation can be used in combination with a variety of funding methods and enforcement procedures to bring about renovation of existing SRO's and other potential shared facility buildings to meet the needs of this segment of the population.

Rehousing solution: New Construction -

It is our belief that shared facilities are not the basic cause of the problem of SRO residents. Support for that belief comes from three separate sources.

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A 1968 proposal for a grant to develop a solution to the SRO problem entitled a "Model SRO": That document makes the suggestion that a plan be drawn up for a newly constructed or rehabilitated "SRO". This new building would make allowances for the space required by the social service in-building programs and would create decent, safe housing. There is no mention of providing individual sanitary or cooking facilities. The proposal simply recommends new housing in which the service program can begin to cope with the problems of the residents.

The feature article by Herbert Levy in the Journal of Housing for December, 1968 entitled "Needed: A New Kind of Single Room Occupancy Housing"²: The recommendation here is for a new building with shared facilities for 560 tenants. It contains a better ratio of sanitary facilities to tenants than present SRO's: for each wing of 12 rooms, there would be 6 water closets, 2 wash-basin rooms, 2 shower-rooms and 2 tub-rooms. There would be no kitchen facilities, but there would be a steam table on the main floor so that a supper cooked off the premises could be served to residents at a low daily charge. The main floor would feature a large social hall and staff offices.

By revising the cost of a low-rent N.Y.C.H.A. project, Mr. Levy has estimated the cost of this new structure to be just short of \$4,000,000 (\$3,960,250). His comparison shows that the expected annual rent of the SRO would be \$96,600 higher than that of the N.Y.C.H.A. low-income project. This surplus would be used to support an in-building service program.

1. Submitted to Borough President Percy Sutton with the approval of Planning Board #7. The study by Kamens & Shiffer, Architects AIA, should get underway in June 1969.
2. Levy, Herbert, from a report originally prepared for the Planetarium Council, p. 572.

Mr. Levy explains that low-income project rents need to cover only operating expense, since the construction costs are subsidized. He urges that similar construction subsidies be used to build this new SRO as well.

A bill passed by the State Legislature which was initiated by the Housing and Development Administration: This bill which was recently approved by the Governor extends the provisions of the Private Housing Finance Law, the so-called "Mitchell-Lama" program, to the construction and rehabilitation of dwelling accommodations which consist of only one room, without either a bathroom or cooking facilities. (S.4488; A.5467). Under Mitchell-Lama, limited profit housing companies may receive long-term, low-interest mortgages of up to 95% of a project's total cost (100% for a non-profit sponsor of housing for the elderly). Mortgages are usually for forty years and the interest rate is between three and four per cent.¹ The subsidy recommended in Mr. Levy's article has not previously been available to support this construction.

The cornerstone of all the proposed new buildings with shared facilities remains a social rehabilitation program, conducted therein. Without that program, no substantial benefit can be claimed for new construction. Mr. Levy acknowledges the "large measure of success" achieved by the new service programs in the extant SRO's. Why then does he advocate costly new construction which still requires² services? His explanation is very significant:

"Both the reported programs of this nature, as well as unreported instances, indicate a large measure of success. But there are

1. Programs administered by the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal.
2. Journal of Housing, December, 1968, P. 575.

several difficulties with this approach. For one thing, the program is utterly dependent on the good will of the individual building manager. If he declines to permit the social workers to be in the building, there is no program. Again, public rooms are essential and in a building designed as an apartment house for family occupancy, public rooms are non-existent. Although a sympathetic manager may give up a small room for an office, there is no place for a larger number of persons to meet.

"Finally, it must be noted that, where a service program has been withdrawn from a building, the pre-existing apathy and anarchy have recurred within the year."

In the course of the present study, a comprehensive memorandum was prepared and will be made available to Community Planning Board #7. This memorandum examined all of the resources for rehousing the SRO tenants. In general they are self-contained efficiency units rather than shared facilities accommodations. The realistic supply of these, particularly for the single, non-¹elderly tenant, is not encouraging.

One important reason for espousing the inclusion of shared facilities in new construction for the tenants of SRO's is the significant economy of this construction. Another is the lesson from the demonstration programs of the importance of the total community structure as a therapeutic tool.

As for Mr. Levy's plan, there is some question about the effect of the size of the building - 560 tenants - on the crucial² social program and as to the items of his budget. Nor is the essential subsidy a certainty. We would suggest, however, that

1. Frank, Charlotte, Housing Report-SRO Study.
2. For these tenants, he provides a project director plus assistant, 3 social workers and a public health nurse technician plus 6 indigenous building leaders with 30-hour weeks on salary and 3 hours a week of a consulting psychiatrist plus ample office help, cleaning service and a fund for program expenses.

if the services program were not financed by the rent surplus (over what a low-rent project would yield) the surplus could be used to make some payments on account of the construction cost.

While we believe that the facilities problem can best be met by the method outlined below, under the title: "A Preferred Alternative", there is every reason to explore further the feasibility of developing new SRO facilities. We therefore RECOMMEND:

THAT all Federal, State and Public Housing legislation be reviewed to see if it can be extended administratively to include the development of housing for non-elderly single persons. If it cannot be extended under present legislation, it is our recommendation that efforts be undertaken to revise legislation in order to include these persons.

2. Rehousing solution - A Preferred Alternative -

One section of the present Administrative Code, if used in combination with a variety of funding and enforcement techniques, could provide a vehicle for meeting the needs of the City's SRO population at considerably less cost than would be incurred by new construction. By making use of this section in a manner which is described below, the 1977 termination law would become a compulsory conduit for the rational redistribution of the SRO population into sound facilities with integrated service programs throughout the City.

Section D26-33.07 of the Code permits the creation of certain SRO's if they are either owned and operated without profit by an educational, religious or charitable institution as a residence for the aged, or for working girls or women, or for working boys or men; or "owned, operated or used by The City of New York." For the purposes of this study, the key to a solution to the SRO problem is that express permission for the creation of SRO's which would be "owned, operated or used by the City of New York."

This statute's principal object was to stop the World War II pattern of converting apartments into SRO units. It prohibited creation of any new SRO's after 1956, except for certain types which are expressly exempt from the prohibition. Upon termination of the exempt type of ownership, use or operation by the institution or public agency for the specified purposes, the prohibition of post-1956 SRO's applies, and the statute provides that the¹ certificate of occupancy shall expire.

If emphasis were now placed on the permission clause of that statute, and if a plan for the geographic distribution of new SRO's were developed and minimal standards for housing and service purposes were set forth, it would be possible to encourage renovation of existing SRO's. These newly renovated facilities could then be certified as "used by the City," on the grounds that these buildings would provide housing for the City's Welfare clients in a context that offers a better chance of rehabilitation than existing facilities. Additionally, this interpretation would be supported by the fact that this strategy would save the City both

1. N.Y.C. Admin. Code, Housing Maintenance Code, D26-33.07 (1968)

the expense of new housing and the cost of neighborhood deterioration by slum SRO's.

In order to accomplish those objectives, we make the following RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT the 1977 SRO termination law remain, but that it serve as a compulsory conduit for the rational redistribution of the SRO population into sound SRO facilities with integrated services;

THAT a plan for the geographic distribution of new SRO's be developed;

THAT minimal standards for housing and service programs be set forth; and

THAT once such plans have been agreed upon, newly renovated SRO's which meet those standards receive a certificate of occupancy as an SRO "used by the City."

There should be no question that the bar of the 1977 termination statute does not apply to SRO's newly created under the express exception in Section D26-33.07. But there might be a technical question as to whether the 1977 bar would fall on any pre-'56 SRO which met the requirements and which it was thought desirable to preserve in the same fashion by certifying the City's "use".

Because of this lack of clarity in the law, we RECOMMEND:

THAT an SRO Task Force, to be created by the Mayor as discussed below, be authorized to certify that SRO's which meet its housing and service programming

standards and are eligible under its planned redistribution of SRO's, are "used" by the City; and,

THAT SRO's so certified be exempt from the 1977 termination.

This approach should also aid in obtaining renovations. In return for any renovations required, the owner would receive his exemption from the 1977 cut-off date; the renovations would be an essential condition precedent to the right to operate the SRO.

Under the present Municipal Loan Fund Law, a municipal loan can be granted for 90% of rehabilitation costs, for a period of up to 30 years, at $5\frac{1}{2}\%$ interest. The private individual is eligible if he agrees to limit his profit and accept rent control. Moreover, tax exemption-tax abatement benefits are available for certain renovations accomplished with the aid of a Municipal Loan. This benefit exempts the value of the improvements from tax and abates taxes over a period of years, allowing the owner to recoup 75% of the value of the improvements. It would appear that these tax benefits are only available where the renovated building is a multiple dwelling erected¹ before April 18, 1929. In any other buildings, the benefits are not available if the renovation creates any SRO's.

A bill initiated by the Housing and Development Administration, which expanded the purpose of this Fund to include its use for the rehabilitation of shared facilities, was passed by the State Legislature at its most recent session and vetoed by the Governor.

In support of the efforts of the Housing and Development Admin., we RECOMMEND:

1. N.Y.C. Administration Code J51-2.5(d)

THAT legislation be reintroduced to expand the purposes of the Municipal Loan Fund to include its use for the rehabilitation of shared facilities.

In addition to this attempt to enlarge the potential uses of the Municipal Loan Fund, we RECOMMEND:

THAT there be a detailed and continuing analysis of other funding sources, potential and available, and a strategy for pursuing them.

For example, the new State law governing health-related facilities may be applicable to the construction of the extra-service SRO's. The pertinent construction and operating codes have not yet been issued. The Health and Hospital Planning Council of Southern New York will be responsible for ascertaining need and reviewing applications. There is some assistance for construction, renovation and staffing half-way houses available from the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, working with the New York City Community Mental Health Board. Although a matching grant is presently required from the City or the voluntary sponsor, new legislation is to be proposed in 1970, providing 100% low-cost long term loans to finance such facilities.

In evaluating this approach to the facilities problem as against the alternative of new construction, it is important to note that the two major requirements of SRO housing set forth by Mr. Levy would have been met. The building manager would no longer be able to refuse to cooperate with the service programs. If he did so, his Certificate of Occupancy could be revoked on the ground that his building could no longer be "used" by the City.

The necessary recreation space would be provided by renovations if it did not already exist in a lobby or basement. It has been pointed out relative to both alternatives that the departure of the social worker causes regression in the tenant population. This would be the case, of course, in a new structure as well as a renovated one. Mr. Levy responds by hiring "his own" workers with the surplus rent role. In our preferred alternative, the response is the launching by the City, in conjunction with private agencies, of a full-blown service program integrated with the rehousing plan. Because these objectives could be achieved at considerably less cost than new construction, we prefer this method of dealing with the facilities dilemma.

Chapter IV: IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS:

1. The program of services -

The effective functioning of a program of services is, as we have seen, the best method yet known for dealing with the individual problems of the SRO tenant and with the problems he causes in his surroundings. Therefore, in developing the qualifications for SRO's which will be certified as "used" by the City in the proposed housing program, a primary concern is to provide the necessary conditions for social rehabilitation.

In order to provide those conditions we RECOMMEND:

THAT in addition to the present requirements of the new building code for SRO's, eligibility for this new certification and its exemption from the 1977 termination be conditioned upon the provision of some recreation space; on some minimal standards for furnishings and mattresses; and on higher standards for security, lights, garbage collection, cleaning and repair.

We RECOMMEND further:

THAT guidelines be developed to ensure basic cooperation with the in-building service program by the owner and manager.

Enumeration of detailed requirements for eligibility for newly created SRO's, and the surviving present SRO's, should await analysis of the realities in terms of the condition and availability of new SRO's and the economics of their compliance, and the number and condition of retained present SRO's. But one fundamental element would give these requirements a special

1. THE PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION

The extensive investigation of a number of writers of the last few years, has been called the "new history of the Reformation". It is a history of the Reformation as it was, not as it should have been. It is a history of the Reformation as it was, not as it should have been. It is a history of the Reformation as it was, not as it should have been.

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force. The building code relies on the Building Department's issuance of violations backed up by a sluggish system of enforcement.¹ To eliminate the inadequacies of that system of enforcement, we RECOMMEND:

THAT if in accordance with guidelines and specifications to be developed by the SRO Task Force, and after investigation and due process, the maintenance or management of the building interferes with the social rehabilitation program, the Certificate of Occupancy should be revoked or otherwise conditioned. (Page 35)

We further RECOMMEND:

THAT a list be developed of supplementary improvements in building maintenance and operation, or in physical facilities, which would justify specific rent increases and which the owner would be assisted in procuring; and,

THAT assistance should be provided the owner in obtaining a municipal loan for any such renovation.

Another vital aspect of these services to SRO tenants is the necessary trained manpower to render the services. The success of many of the demonstration programs has been due not only to the effective work of the DOSS but in large measure to the imaginative effort of many private agencies. It is important that in any future program development, the knowledge of these private agencies be tapped and that the links which

1. For example, many present SRO operators are functioning although lacking the permit which the code requires. The presence of violations disqualified them from obtaining the permits and lack of a permit just means a violation.

have been established between them and DOSS be deepened and broadened.

To achieve that object we RECOMMEND:

THAT the DOSS caseworkers constitute the primary source of manpower, since an estimated minimum of 40% of all SRO tenants presently receive public assistance, and since the DOSS staff is already involved with the SRO problem; and THAT a mechanism be created which will ensure the vital contribution of private agencies to program design, operation and evaluation.

The Amsterdam Center of the DOSS was, of course, one of the leading participants in the demonstration service projects. Presently pending before the Commissioner of DOSS is a staff recommendation from the Amsterdam Center which proposes changes in DOSS operation, so that the successful methods of the demonstration projects may be more widely used in SRO's.

¹
The proposal cites as the central finding of the demonstration projects that a new kind of delivery of services was made possible by the presence of staff in the buildings where the clients live. This presence was the result of caseload consolidation, concentrating all of a worker's clients in one building. The nature of the work is thus described:

"In SRO buildings live individuals without families. Nevertheless many tenants are socially connected in an haphazard way, try to help one another both materially and emotionally. It becomes the worker's task to recognize, understand, and connect these small groups of people; then the pre-existent mutual aid system can be intensified to the point where the help rendered includes going

1. A Department of Social Services Plan for SRO Tenants' Population, June 1968, mimeographed 11 pp.

to hospitals, calling appropriate agencies when needed and enhancing the pleasurable aspect of life in the SRO's with tenants' organizations and planned activity. The workers then can help the client to take on a different role; he is no longer just a suppliant. He begins to experience being a helper on behalf of another client. This process of assuming an additional role enables the client to change from being a dependent, apathetic person to one who is partly in control of his destiny. While the clients render to each other actual helping services, the assumption of the responsibility also has therapeutic value. From the experience of the DOSS workers at the Amsterdam Welfare Center, it appears that specific individual casework goals are more quickly achievable, when client and worker are both exposed to individual and group experiences in each other's presence."

This DOSS proposal calls for revision of policies relating to the delivery of services to SRO tenants which will permit:

1. Services to non-public assistance tenants as a preventive service or as a follow-up service to a former welfare recipient;
2. The group visit as equivalent to the individual visit;
3. Work with community agencies in behalf of clients; and
4. Program expenses as part of a recreation-rehabilitation plan, including food and equipment. The first two changes relate to the Department's internal difficulties in modifying its procedures and practices and obtaining the necessary formal State and Federal approval for these changes.

A training program for staff, either internally operated or conducted by an outside agency, is also seen as essential by the writers of the proposal. They recommend that St. Luke's have major responsibility for the first year's training. The

flexible revision of working hours is called for, to permit the optimum SRO group work which takes place in late afternoon or early evening.

This DOSS proposal was accompanied by a more detailed report from "Unit 22" -- the six caseworkers and supervisors who functioned in three of the demonstration projects operated as parts of the research enterprise of the St. Luke's Department of Community Psychiatry.¹ This report reviews the experiences of these caseworkers in their cooperative work with St. Luke's and its research staff and their weekly training and consultation sessions in the group process with the Director of this research program. The report details the learning experiences in their seminars on the group process and in their actual work with SRO tenants individually and in groups.

Although there is high praise for their seminar as training for work with small groups of 6 to 10 welfare clients in the SRO, the students report that they did not generally feel competent enough to handle the group work involved in the building-wide tenants associations. This group work had been done by a social work student in each building who left when the school year² ended. Ultimately, however, the caseworker trainees took over this work also.

It is our RECOMMENDATION:

THAT a plan which was prepared by DOSS staff from the Amsterdam Center, proposing changes in DOSS operation so that the successful methods of the demonstration projects could be more widely used

1. Report on Amsterdam - St. Luke's Hospital SRO Project by Unit 22, Amsterdam Welfare Center, Department of Social Services, June 1968.
2. Id. at pp. 16-18.

in SRO's, should become the basis for development of new methods of service delivery and of staff training.

2. A Mayor's SRO Task Force -

In order to initiate a concerted attack on the SRO problem and to make plans for a redistribution of SRO's geographically and for the enforcement of a practical set of requirements for the physical condition of the buildings, which include cooperation with a flexible service program in the building, the SRO problem will have to be raised to a high level of priority in the Mayor's office.

To achieve that objective, we RECOMMEND:

THAT the problem be given priority attention by the Mayor's Policy Planning Council;

THAT the Policy Planning Council appoint a Single Room Occupancy Task Force to initiate central planning and evaluation, and to develop mechanisms for the coordination of programs, agencies and staff;

THAT the proposed mayoral appointees to this Task Force, ex-officio, be the Administrators of the Housing and Development Administration, Health Services Administration and Human Resources Administration, the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services, and the Chairmen of the City Planning Commission, and the N.Y.C. Housing Authority; and

THAT this Task Force be appointed for the period of one year, at which time progress in planning, program development and administration should be reviewed to see whether or not the continuation of the Task Force is required.

We recommend a Task Force at the level of the Policy Planning Council for the following reasons:

- The development and implementation of an effective housing and service program for SRO tenants would cut across major administrative lines. Of necessity, the effort would have to involve the Department of City Planning, the Human Resources Administration, the Housing and Development Administration, and the Health Services Administration;
- While the percentage of the City's total population with which we are dealing directly is small, their impact on the neighborhood and the number of people discommoded by "the SRO problem" is disproportionate to the number of SRO tenants;
- The problems of the landlords, tenants and neighborhoods are complex and require inter-agency mechanisms for their solution.

We recommend a one-year life for the Task Force in order to provide the City with sufficient time both to carry out studies and initiate programs, and to develop its own administrative mechanism to implement building and service program plans.

In view of the goal that in rehousing the SRO tenants there be a rational dispersion of this population via a planned program integrating the requirements for housing and services, we RECOMMEND:

THAT the Chairman of the Task Force be selected by the Mayor from the membership of the Policy Planning Council.

It would be the responsibility of the Task Force to establish policy for a City-Wide program of human services and building improvements which will meet the needs of SRO residents and their neighborhoods.

In order to carry out this responsibility, it is our RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Task Force be provided a Project Manager, a small staff, and a budget.

The Project Manager should have two major functions:

- To guide and respond to the members of the Task Force; and
- To coordinate the field operation and the work of municipal agencies as that work relates to SRO's.

Specifically we RECOMMEND:

THAT the staff design and oversee the conduct of the following studies which would lead to a rational plan for the redistribution and improvement of SRO facilities, and to the development of a City-wide service program for SRO residents:

A Survey of the SRO tenant population.

There is no firm data as to the number of alcoholics, addicts, elderly tenants who are poor but without pathology, persons released from jail or mental institutions, etc. This survey could estimate,

perhaps with the cooperation of DOSS workers acquainted with the tenants, how many tenants are, or are not, susceptible to social rehabilitation, using current methods.

Many of the experienced persons consulted during this study favored the straining out and segregation of SRO tenants who were too sick physically or too troubled to care for themselves, while not needing, or not eligible for, existing institutional care. This study should identify the number and variety of tenants who seem to require more care than the standard SRO would provide. Present estimates are 5 to 10%. At least two separate proposals for extra service SRO's for such tenants have been presented, ¹ which call for purchase or operation of such SRO's by the DOSS.

A cost analysis which would provide basic information about the resources which are presently expended in support of "the SRO way of life." Such an analysis would seek to describe welfare, police and fire department expenditures which are attributable to this problem. It would also seek to estimate the cost of building deterioration and depressed

1. A Proposal for a Multi-Service Program for Tenants in Multi-Problem SRO Buildings in the West Side of Manhattan, prepared by Edna Baer, May, 1967, developed by the NCB and furnished to the Study from its files; Recommendations Regarding Operation of SRO's, see list in Appendix "A".

rental levels which are brought about in areas of high SRO concentration.

- . A more detailed analysis and evaluation of the experience gained from the demonstration projects to determine, for example, whether released mental patients benefit from the group process when applied in the building, or would do better in a "half-way" facility, and in either event, how their presence helps or hinders the other tenants. Similar issues exist as to alcoholics and problem drinkers, addicts and the elderly. We know there is some tendency for SRO's to specialize in particular types. The feasibility of developing specialized SRO's should be explored in this study.
- . An inventory of funding resources to support both in and out-of-building service programs. Preparation of a funding inventory should explore Federal, State and Municipal programs such as: the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, the New York City Community Mental Health Board, various Offices for the Aging, the New York State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Office of Economic Opportunity and the New York City Board of Education.
- . A survey of present SRO and SRO-type buildings, beginning with the West Side Study area, des-

cribing the condition of each building, and its state of compliance with service program requirements. From this and the population survey, the quality of the SRO's should be graded on a detailed scale.

- . A study of available multiple dwellings readily convertible to or useable as SRO's, in other parts of the City.

Planners and experienced social workers should be consulted on the location of these new SRO's in terms of population density, access to public facilities and acceptance in the neighborhood.

- . An architectural and construction study.

This study would develop models for the renovation of existing SRO's and for newly constructed shared facilities buildings.

- . The cost and feasibility of having the City lease an SRO. Such a study would seek to determine whether the elimination of the leasee's profit would pay for the more intensive managerial, cleaning and homemaking services required in the extra service SRO which was discussed above.

- . All of the possible varieties of ownership and operation of the newly certified SRO's which are immune to the 1977 bar should be analyzed and evaluated. One variety is the ownership and operation without profit by a

religious, charitable or educational institution of an SRO for the elderly, which is also exempt from the prohibition against creating new SRO's.

We RECOMMEND:

THAT since all these studies relate to the development of more adequate housing, their cost be borne by the City's capital budget.

It is our further RECOMMENDATION:

THAT two matters receive high priority attention by the Task Force and its staff:

- . Exploration of the feasibility of the "City-use" concept described above; and
- . Development and institution of a training program for DOSS group workers.

In all these areas, primary responsibility for the conduct of studies and programs should rest with appropriate City agencies, particularly the Human Resources Administration, the Housing Development Administration and the Department of City Planning. It should be the responsibility of the Task Force staff to provide primary leadership in the design of studies and the planning of programs. However, in order to benefit from the experience and knowledge of the many private agencies who have been involved in this field, we RECOMMEND:

THAT provision be made to contract with private agencies to carry out studies and to perform such other services as the Task Force may deem appropriate.

3. The West Side -

Because of the predominance of SRO's on the West Side and because West Side agencies have developed considerable experience in programming for SRO's, we RECOMMEND:

THAT the West Side be designated by the Task Force as its first demonstration area.

Pending development of a City-wide program, we RECOMMEND:

THAT service programs be launched in each problem SRO and SRO-type building on the West Side.

Some of the data on the state of the buildings and the SRO tenant census by problem types, required for the rehousing plan, could be obtained through this program, as could more research results bearing on effective service delivery methods.

A survey which pinpointed the worst problems with tenants and buildings among the West Side's SRO's, could present the

material for several pilot projects in rehousing which would test new SRO's, different locations, specialized groupings of problem tenants, etc.

There will continue to be a rich series of potential roles and contributions from voluntary agencies and community organizations including block associations, churches and other groups, whose cooperation should be obtained and coordinated.

In the light of the leadership Community Planning Board No. 7 has provided in this field on the West Side, it is our RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Community Planning Board No. 7

be requested to create an SRO Advisory

Committee.

This Committee should include representatives of agencies, citizen organizations and tenant groups concerned or working with SRO problems. The Committee's functions should include

the following: .

a) serving as an initial response group for review of all plans for expansion of service; b) providing a full range of agency and community evaluation of the effectiveness of programs after they have begun; and c) helping to devise new and imaginative programs of interest to the community and the tenants.

4. Proposed Staff and Costs for SRO Task Force - One Year -

We have made the following computations in order to arrive at an estimated budget for the initiation of service programs on the West Side. It is estimated that there are 40 to 60 problem SRO and SRO-type buildings on the West Side.

These buildings range from those which have high visibility in the neighborhood, a tenant population of 50% welfare clients, and a high rate of building violations to those which have low visibility, minimal violations, and a population whose problems are not visible to the neighborhood. At the present time, there is a social service program of some type in 15 of those buildings. For the purpose of this proposal, it is suggested therefore that a social service program be developed in 25 to 45 buildings. In those buildings where the self-service method has been tested and developed, it has been shown that program can be initiated and maintained by a single worker who spends his full time in the building for the first three months and half-time thereafter. It has been further shown that the stress of this work precludes the possibility of a worker carrying two buildings at any one time, and that in order to be effective, experienced workers need to be used.

Without accurate information about the number of SRO and SRO-type buildings and tenants, it is impossible to make an accurate estimate of the cost of initiating a full program on the West Side. It is suggested that for the purpose of budget estimation, it be assumed that new program is required in 35 buildings; that the modal building houses 150 tenants; and that a worker would be assigned to every 150 tenants, full time for the first three program months and half-time for the remaining nine months.

On the basis of those assumptions, and using workers who receive an annual salary of \$9,000.00, the Personnel costs of the program would be \$196,875. It is estimated that the Program costs, in addition to Personnel, are in the area of \$1.00 per month per tenant. On that basis, additional Program costs for 35 buildings would be \$63,000.00.

It is our judgment that substantial portions of these monies could be furnished through DOSS and then be eligible for State and Federal subsidies.

The bulk of other recommended expenditures in the proposed budget are for research and development. Much of it would be spent on developing information and plans. Once housing and service studies have been carried out and plans developed, the programs themselves should become a part of the work of line agencies, with customary Federal and State subsidies.

Estimated Costs for SRO Task Force and West Side Service Program -

To carry out the work of the Task Force outlined above:

Project Director	\$22,000
Chief Program Planner	16,500
Program Assistant	12,500
Administrative Assistant	8,500
Secretary	6,000
1 Clerk-Typist @ \$5,500	5,500
1 Statistical Clerk	7,500
Salary - TOTAL	<u>\$78,500</u>
Telephones, Rental and Supplies	20,000
	<u>\$98,500</u>

To develop SRO data, program evaluation and service plans; and to carry out architectural studies and develop housing plans	\$100,000
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<u>To develop social service program on the West Side:</u>	\$259,875
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The investment of these resources would enable the City to plan and initiate a program which would meet the needs of SRO tenants and

their neighborhoods. Significant progress has already been made on the West Side. If the City were now to build on the experience which has been gained there, taking advantage of the impetus which West Side citizens and agencies have created, it could contribute in a significant way to the renewal and rebirth of that community.

There is a great deal of interest in the
subject of the history of the
country and the people who
lived there. The history of the
country is a very interesting
subject and the people who
lived there are very interesting
people.

Yours truly,

John Doe

APPENDIX "A"

LISTING OF DOCUMENTS
(Resource Materials and Bibliography)

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"The Slum Hotel: An Arena for Group Work with Urban Rejected" (Paper presented 3/24/67, National Conference on Social Welfare, at Dallas, Texas, mimeo. 29 pp.)

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Mrs. Lillian Zerwick, "The Public Agency as a Team Participant in Providing Mental Health Services (Presented to 1967 Conference of American Orthopsychiatric Association, mimeo 13pp.)

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(Amsterdam Center, July 1968, mimeo, pp. 9)

- "Report on Amsterdam, St. Lukes Hospital SRO Project"
(By Unit 22, Amsterdam Center, June 1968)
- "Training, Education and Services Project for Rooming House Residents"
(A proposal from Hudson Neighborhood Conservation Project, 8/31/67, mimeo. 13 pp.)
- "A Climate of Belonging for the Elderly and the Isolated" (A report on the Stratford Arms Project, in The Welfarer, Department of Welfare, June 1966, Vol. XVIII, No. 6, pp. 8-16)
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(a report prepared for the City of New York, City Rent and Rehabilitation Administration)
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"The World of 207"

Mrs. Shirley Silverberg, Roosevelt Hospital (Community Liaison Worker; former Director of Hudson Neighborhood Conservation Project)

Edward Schwartzberg, Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development

Miss Rae Tatenbaum, City Department of Social Services (Former Supervisor, Stratford Arms Project)

Martin Walter, West Side Chamber of Commerce (Secretary; member of Community Planning Board #7)

Harold Weingarten, Rooming House Association (Executive)

Mrs. Mary Wheeler, Neighborhood Conservation Bureau (Coordinator, West 85th Street SRO Block Project)

Mrs. Lillian Zerwick, Department of Social Services (Director, Amsterdam Welfare Center)

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
PUBLISHED WEEKLY
535 N. Dearborn Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60610
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance

Entered as Second-Class Matter, June 26, 1925, Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under No. 384,391
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on July 1, 1978

Postmaster: Send address changes in this journal to THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 535 N. Dearborn Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60610
Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Ill.

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Printed in the United States of America

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
535 N. Dearborn Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60610
Telephone (312) 462-5000

Subscription service available through the American Medical Association
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance

APPENDIX "B"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND LIST OF PERSONS CONTACTED

Acknowledgements

Many of the agency executives and community leaders listed below gave considerable time to the staff conducting the study. Individual SRO tenants who were interviewed, and tenant leaders who participated in the public meeting on October 15th, are not individually identified but their help in providing information is particularly acknowledged.

The Chairman of the SRO Study Committee for Community Planning Board #7, Mr. Charles S. Ascher, invaluable assisted the staff during this study. In his absence, during a part of the study, his role was filled by Henry R. Marquit, President of the Board. In addition to the chairman, the Committee consisted of Mrs. Eve Davidson, Mr. Robert Kagan, Mr. Edward A. Rosen and Mr. Irvin J. Schwartz. The Committee held three meetings during the course of the study, one at its inception, another later in the study to which leaders of agencies active in SRO projects were invited, and the public meeting to which the Committee invited tenant leaders.

Additionally, we gratefully acknowledge the help of members of the Executive Committee of the Planetarium Neighborhood Council and of the Executive and Supervisory Staff of the Neighborhood Conservation Bureau. Group meetings were help with each of these agencies.

The following persons were seen individually by one or more of the study staff.

List of Persons Seen

Martin Abramowitz, Department of Social Services (Program Development)

Colonel Harold Anderson, Salvation Army (Manager of Evangeline Residence and Building Programs)

Fabian Aranson, Department of Social Services (Administrative Assistant Operations)

Mrs. Edna Baer, Director of Office of Problem Housing, Housing and Development Administration

Douglas Brian, Neighborhood Conservation Bureau (Director of Hudson Neighborhood Conservation Project)

Mrs. Alice Brophy, Mayor's Office of The Aging (formerly Assistant Deputy Administrator, Human Resources Administration)

Mrs. Lucille Brody, Office of the Borough President of Manhattan (Secretary, Cmmunity Planning Board #7)

Mrs. Katherine Caldwell, Neighborhood Conservation Bureau (Director, West Side South Office)

George Catrataro, Housing and Development Administration (Legal Services)

Morris Chase, Department of Social Services (Director, Shelter Services for Adults)

David Cohen, Housing and Development Administration (Office of Relocation)

George Clark, Neighborhood Conservation Bureau (Coordinator, Endicott Hotel Project)

Preston David, N.Y. City Housing Authority (Director of Social Services)

Phillip Davis, Center for the Mentally Retarded (Administrative Director, Educational Guidance)

John Farrow, Neighborhood Health Services Project, St. Luke's Hospital (former SRO tenant and SRO project worker)

Herman Forstenza, N. Y. State Department of Mental Hygiene (Second Deputy Ccmmissioner)

Sylvan S. Furman, N.Y. State Department of Mental Hygiene (Assistant Commissioner, N. Y. City Office)

Herbert Gessler, Department of Social Services (Amsterdam Center, Case Supervisor directing addicts units and staff at Endicott and Stratford Arms projects)

Commissioner Jack R. Goldberg, Department of Social Services

Mrs. Florence Hirschman, Neighborhood Conservation Bureau (Director, Bloomingdale Neighborhood Conservation Project)

Richard Hill, New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (Special Assistant for Development)

Charles Horan, Urban Renewal Agency (Director)

Mrs. Shirley Kaye, Neighborhood Conservation Bureau (Deputy Director)

Mrs. Wilma Klein, Department of Social Services (Group Work Consultant)

Martin Kotler, Housing and Development Administration

John Kowal, Planetarium Neighborhood Council (President; also Chairman of
Neighborhood Advisory Council, W. 85th St. SRO Block Project)

Miss Winifred Lally, Assistant Commissioner of Department of Social Services

Dr. Lawrence Levit, Roosevelt Hospital (Director, Department of Community
Psychiatry)

John Maylott, Federal Housing Administration (Director, Multiple Dwelling
Housing)

Joseph J. Mazziotta, Housing and Development Administration (Chief Inspector,
Office of Code Enforcement)

Menney, State Department of Health (Associate Director, Division
of Renewal and Planning)

Howard Moses, Hospital Review and Planning Council

Benjamin Moshel, Housing and Development Administration (Legal Services)

Frank Natale, Addiction Services Agency (Treatment Director, Phoenix Houses)

Jason Nathan, Administrator, Housing and Development Administration

Mrs. Carrol Novick, Director of Social Planning, Neighborhood Conservation
Bureau

Mrs. Pauline Phillips, Department of Social Services (Supervisor, Caseworker
Unit - Endicott Hotel Project)

Raymond Pignato, Housing and Development Administration (Director, Office of
Property Management)

Henry Pollack, Hudson Community Action Project (former SRO resident and
tenant leader)

Ann Roberts, Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (Deputy
Regional Administrator)

Richard Rothman, VISTA (West 85th Street SRO Block Project)

Barney Rabinow, Department of City Planning (Director of Local Area Planning)

Louis Reitner, Housing and Development Administration (Municipal Loan Program)

Mrs. Ruth Schwartz, Community Service Society (Administrator-Coordinator,
Endicott Hotel Project)

Mrs. Joan Shapiro, St. Luke's Hospital Center (Chief of Social Work, Department
of Community Psychiatry)

Robert Shapiro, St. Luke's Hospital Center (Social Services Director, Neighbor-
hood Health Services Project)

Appendix "C"

Annotated Chronology of Past Demonstration Projects -

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The first three SRO building service projects got underway in 1962. All involved recreation programs, building improvement efforts, and referrals to agencies for services needed by SRO tenants. Although they were terminated by 1964 - two actually ended in 1963 - they established a series of important principles:

THAT SRO tenants needed and would be responsive to interest and help;

THAT relatively untrained personnel such as social work students could work effectively in these buildings; and,

THAT SRO tenants would participate in self-help activities and could work cooperatively with some of their neighbors.

The first three projects were: 205 W. 85th St., (80 units) A project of the NCB's West Side South office, with consultation from the Community Psychiatry Division of St. Luke's Hospital. 310 W. 95 St. (200 units) A project of the NCB's Hudson Conservation office, again with consultation from St. Luke's, and with staff help from a Peace Corps trainee and a social work student from Columbia University School of Social Work. Block project in the 300 block W. 95th St., involving the NCB's Hudson Conservation office, the Manhattan After-Care Clinic of the State Department of Mental Hygiene and the Amsterdam Center of the Department of Welfare.

1. All the factual material in this section is taken from a detailed outline prepared and made available by the Neighborhood Conservation Bureau of the Housing and Development Administration. Mrs. Carol Novick, former Director of Social Planning for the NCB, not only developed this outline to aid this study but also reviewed and analyzed the Bureau's SRO files which were also made available to us.

This latter project emphasized outstationing of welfare and after-care workers on the block to attempt better delivery of services to their clientele. The project also worked at housing enforcement.

The next three projects, which began in the fall of 1964 and continued well into 1965, were more significant since each of them involved more agencies, attempted fuller programming and added further insights into the situation and populations in the SRO and SRO-type buildings. They led to more projects and to the beginning of the planning and development of proposals for comprehensive expansion of such services.

In historical order, these prototype projects were:

207 W. 85th St. (91 units) The initiator was the NCB's West-Side In-Building Committee (an interagency committee) which planned a full-scale team approach. The major cooperating agencies were the Amsterdam Center of the Department of Welfare, Catholic Charities, Community Health Studies Program of Columbia University, Community Service Society, State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Goddard-Riverside Center, Institute of Urban Studies, Columbia University, Morningside Mental Hygiene Clinic, Neighborhood Conservation Bureau and its West Side South office, Riverside Health Center, Salvation Army, St. Luke's Hospital and its Department of Community Psychiatry, Visiting Nurses Service. Programs were comprised of in-building activities, inter-agency multi-service programs for individuals and groups--including public assistance, counselling and group work services, vocational counselling and housing improvements.

The following excerpts from "The World of 207", a

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report on this project, give some of its facets.

1. "The World of 207." Report prepared by "The West Side In-Building Committee", Neighborhood Conservation Bureau, 2/66, mimeographed, pp 47. See Appendix A for complete citation.

"...The interdisciplinary team... consisted of: a nurse, a group worker, a neighborhood conservation worker, and caseworkers... plus agency staff to work cooperatively with the team, offering consultation, picking up on referrals and providing...services. (p. 5)

"...Among the 80 tenants, 52 were public welfare recipients and 24 were non-welfare...the average public welfare grant was \$59 semi-monthly...Among the employable tenants the average...income level was...\$150 semi-monthly... (pp. 8-9)

"the core group were...long-term welfare recipients who have major medical difficulties...the elderly, sick and unemployed. This group may be victimized by acts of violence in the building...they drink but their behavior pattern is not disturbing to other persons in the building. The second core group includes the more chronic drinkers and gamblers...who may make noise; get lost when they are drunk; need help to get to their rooms; and may dirty the bathrooms.

"The transient group...consists of... those who are dependent on welfare because of an acute illness, but have the potential for re-employment... A second transient sub-group may use public assistance occasionally or may work intermittently but live primarily by preying on other residents. Some are narcotic addicts... (pp. 9-10)

"Medical needs were the most urgent of the tenants' needs...As tenants began to use health services, they frequently influenced others to accept suggestions for their health needs...(p. 17)

Bryn Mawr--32 W. 121st St. (110 units) The initiator and manager of this project was the Department of Community Psychiatry of St. Luke's Hospital. Coop-

erating agencies included the Manhattan General Hospital, and Morningside Heights Inc., a community group, the Amsterdam Welfare Center, and St. Luke's Hospital.

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Programs included tenant organization, recreation and food programs, referrals of tenants to social and health agencies, relocation, and tenant leadership training.

300 Block W. 85th St. (6 SRO buildings, 665 units) This project preceded by two years the present W. 85th St. block project and is important as a block effort which stressed mainly non-social service functions, particularly the development of a block association of SRO tenants and their more affluent neighbors, housing code enforcement and the development of tenant leadership and tenant organization. The initiating agency was the NCB's West Side South office, which elicited cooperation and volunteer help from the West End Collegiate Church, student volunteers from the Union Theological Seminary and a student from Columbia University School of Social Work.

Two other projects, which began in 1966, have also terminated. They are: Warren Hall, 404 W. 115 St. (140 units) The

1. "Single Room Occupancy" Community of the Alone"
Mrs. Joan Shapiro, Department of Community Psychiatry,
St. Luke's Hospital. See Attachment #1 for full citation.

initiating agency was the Department of Community Psychiatry at St. Luke's Hospital, which obtained the cooperation of social work and other students from Columbia, a student assistant from Smith College, and interested help from the Tenant Association of 60 Morningside Drive. The Edison, 8 W. 104th St. (38 units) The initiating agency was the NCB Central Office and cooperating agencies were: the Amsterdam Social Services Center, Columbia University School of Social Work, Visiting Nurses of New York, and West Side North office of the NCB.

Some of these projects were short-lived because funding for staff ran out; some were planned as short-term projects; others were succeeded by other projects.

List of Current Projects - SRO's and SRO-type Buildings -

All subsequent demonstration projects, some of which began as early as August, 1965, and others which started as late as May 1968, are still in existence, although several of them are relatively inactive and some have changed sponsorship from one lead agency to another. In historical order, these projects and the principal agencies cooperating in them are:

Stratford Arms Hotel, 117 W. 70th St. (400 units)

Initiating Agency: Amsterdam Social Service Center.

Cooperating Agencies: Roosevelt Hospital and its Department of Community Psychiatry.

Vancouver Hotel, 314 W. 94 St. (110 units)

Initiating Agency: St. Luke's Department of Community Psychiatry. Cooperating Agencies: Amsterdam Social Service Center; Hudson Conservation Project of the

NCB; and Columbia University School of Social Work.

330 W. 95th St. (200 units) Initiated by the Hudson Conservation Project of the NCB with the cooperation of the Amsterdam Center, the Hudson Public Health Clinic, and a student volunteer from Baruard College.

315 W. 94th St. (180 units) Initiated by the Hudson Conservation Project of NCB with the cooperation of the Amsterdam Center, VISTA, and the Hudson Community Action project.

The Harvard, 304 W. 99th St. (135 units) Initiated by the W. 99th St. Improvement Association, but carried forward mainly by the Bloomingdale Conservation office of the NCB, with the cooperation of the Amsterdam Center and the Departments of Community Psychiatry and Neighborhood Health Service of St. Luke's Hospital.

316 W. 95th St. (91 units) Initiated by the Hudson Conservation office of the NCB with cooperation from the Amsterdam Center, a student from City College, and help from the Hudson Community Action Project.

Endicott Hotel, Columbus Ave. & W. 81st St. (453 units) Initiated by West Side South of the NCB and the Planetarium Council, carried

forward by Community Service Society and the NCB, with cooperation from the Amsterdam Center, Roosevelt Hospital Department of Community Psychiatry, St. Luke's Hospital Department of Community Psychiatry, and some university student volunteers.

300 Block W. 85th St. (665 units in six buildings)

Initiated by the Planetarium Council, the W. of Broadway 85th St. Association, and the Neighborhood Conservation Bureau, and carried forward under the aegis of a Neighborhood Council and with the cooperation of many agencies including: the Amsterdam Center, the Addiction Services Agency, The Department of Social Services Treatment Unit for Alcoholics from Operation Bowery, Roosevelt Hospital and its Department of Community Psychiatry, Neighborhood Health Services Project of St. Luke's Hospital, VISTA, Volunteers of America.

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Ford Foundation Research Project Buildings

106 W. 83rd St. (80 units)
319 W. 94th St. (200 units)
317 W. 95th St. (150 units) For these building projects, the initiating and managing agency was the Department of Community Psychiatry from the fall of 1967 until Summer 1968, when the Amsterdam Center, one of the cooperating agencies, took over this responsibility. Other cooperating agencies include: Hudson

1. A full report on this research, and the insights obtained from previous projects, is being prepared for publication as a book by Mrs. Joan Shapiro, Director of Social Work, Department of Community Psychiatry, St. Luke's Hospital Center. Its present title is "Single Room Occupancy: Communities of the Destitute and Alone."

Conservation Project of the Neighborhood Conservation Bureau, St. Luke's Hospital and its Neighborhood Health Service, and Roosevelt Hospital.

Marseille Hotel (216 units) The initiating agency was Bloomingdale Conservation Project of the Neighborhood Conservation Bureau, with the cooperation of the Neighborhood Health Service of St. Luke's Hospital, VISTA, the Amsterdam Center, the United Welfare League, and a social work student from Columbia University School of Social Work.

222 Riverside Dr. (256 units) The initiating agency, functioning primarily alone in an exploratory period, is the Hudson Conservation Bureau of the NCB.

Centre Hotel, 249 W. 80th St. (80 units) The initiating agencies are the West Side South office of the NCB and the W. 80th St. Block Association, with cooperation from the Amsterdam Center, Roosevelt Hospital and its Department of Community Psychiatry, and a student volunteer from Hunter College.

Brief Description of Three Current Projects -

A brief description of three of these projects illustrates characteristic similarities and differences: the Stratford Arms, the Endicott Hotel, and the block project in the 300 Block of W. 85th. All of them are large

projects, but each illustrates patterns of organization and operation relevant for smaller structures as well:

The Stratford Arms -

This project has been in operation for more than three years and is operated by two agencies. From the beginning, the project was given stimulation and leadership by the Amsterdam Center of the Department of Social Services. The DOSS caseworkers functioned in effect as part of a cooperative team "led" by two psychiatrists from the Roosevelt Hospital Departments of Community and of Adult Psychiatry and a psychiatric social work supervisor from the hospital. The caseworkers of the Amsterdam Center progressively consolidated their caseload responsibility for DOSS clients at the Stratford. They have not only rendered the usual individual and group services to these clients but have also assumed responsibility for in-building recreation and activity programs and for tenant organization. The workers assigned to this project imaginatively developed coffee hours, holiday dinners, and other self-help activity programs. They also did unique experimentation with tenant dramatics, established a tenant-operated library, and arranged for tenants to attend theatres and concerts outside the building.

Roosevelt Hospital's participation has consisted of regular bi-weekly seminars held by its two psychiatrists and the psychiatric social work supervisor for the

DOSS Team members. The Hospital's Team also refers patients to hospitals and clinics to meet basic physical and mental needs, and gives some on-site psychiatric examinations to make diagnosis and determine the need for either clinic treatment, nursing home or hospital care. Roosevelt has been a source of funds for essential program activity costs. Their seminars also provide training for the DOSS worker assigned to this project.

The Endicott Hotel -

From its beginning, this project has been more complex in its interagency relationships and functions than the two-agency pattern at the Stratford. The lead agency, which until recently carried administrative responsibility, has been the Community Service Society. Its branch office executive in this area served as the coordinator-administrator of the project. He worked with staff members from the Amsterdam Center, from the West Side South office of the NCB, and with volunteers from the Planetarium Neighborhood Council. The CSS has had both regular and temporary staff of its own assigned to the project, and has met necessary program activity costs from its funds. An interagency committee has served in an advisory role to the project coordinator. CSS staff has assisted in the development of the recreational activities program, and has also made its staff on the project and in its area office available

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for counselling and individual service to tenants, helping them with referrals to other agencies, including health services as needed. Concurrently the social workers from the Amsterdam Center have maintained a regular schedule at the hotel and have given both individual and group services to their recipient-clients. At the end of the summer of 1968 CSS withdrew from its administrative responsibilities but continued its provision of staff services and its participation in the project inter-agency committee. Responsibility to administer the program was then assumed by the N.C.B. Most recently DOSS has taken on that role.

Programmatically, the activities and tenant participation in this project are similar to those described for the Stratford but with such variations as: weekly current events groups, tenant jazz "combos" and variety shows, a tenants' cooperative store offering canned goods at wholesale, a periodic news bulletin, and some out-of-the-building sports activities including participation in a soft-ball league. The project has emphasized building cleanliness as a major activity of floor organizations. These smaller floor groups have provided the project with access to isolated individuals. Both internal and external difficulties have been appreciably reduced since the project began.

West 85th St. Block Program

As noted above, there was a short-lived effort in this block several years ago to begin a service program for

SRO's and their tenants, but the first effort proved abortive. In the spring of 1967, following a highly publicized killing on the block, a combination of pressures and interests made possible the leasing of a building by the City to serve as a neighborhood service center for programs and agencies attempting to work together to aid the SRO tenants on the block. An Advisory Council, with a Steering Committee, was formed representing¹ tenant organizations, the citizens W. of Broadway 85th St. Association, one of the active organizations in the Planetarium Neighborhood Council, the Amsterdam Social Services Center, the Neighborhood Conservation Bureau, and other cooperating agencies including the Neighborhood Health Project of St. Luke's Hospital, Roosevelt Hospital Department of Community Psychiatry and the Addiction Services Agency and others.

VISTA workers have been active in this block project as organizers of a series of tenant groups and as staff assistants in the block recreation programs conducted in the multi-purpose building. The Community building includes offices for a unit of social workers from the Amsterdam Center and space for other organizations which provide regularly scheduled but not daily services.

A new and useful activity in meeting tenant needs and

1. Two of the major tenant groups are the Neighborhood Improvement Association and the Community Action Team.

providing work and training possibilities has been developed in the form of a combined cafeteria and food training project at the community building, funded by the anti-poverty agency. This cafeteria serves nutritious food at cost and trains selected SRO tenants. In its initial period of operation, the project has made important positive contributions by providing a setting in which concerned citizens and tenants have worked together on problems and tenant needs. Coordination and effectiveness has apparently not always been achieved on a basis acceptable to the participants. But considering the diversity of interests and emphases, results have been satisfactory. The project reveals the values in broad cooperative efforts and also the difficulties which confront interest parties as they come to terms with each other and seek to develop constructive working relationships.

